

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3816

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FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION ARA/PAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PN
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR JORDEN'S REMARKS TO SENATE COMMITTEE

REF: PANAMA 6818

1. PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS IN REFTEL:

2. IN PARA. 6, FIFTH SENTENCE MAKE IT READ "WE AGREED TO PAY
PANAMA \$10,000,000 AND THE MUNIFICENT SUM OF \$250,000 A YEAR.

3. PARA. 10, REVISE AS FOLLOWS: "AND THIS BRINGS ME, MR. CHAIRMAN,
TO ONE OF THE CENTRAL POINTS I WISH TO MAKE TODAY. FOR US
AMERICANS, THE KEY GOAL IN THIS SITUATION--IT SEEMS TO ME--
IS TO ASSURE THAT THE PANAMA CANAL IS OPEN AND EFFICIENT,
AVAILABLE TO US AND TO WORLD COMMERCE, AND THAT IT BE PROPERLY
PROTECTED AGAINST EXTERNAL ATTACK. I BELIEVE THE TREATIES BEFORE
YOU GIVE US THAT ASSURANCE. OPPONENTS OF THOSE TREATIES WOULD
HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT PANAMA'S KEY GOAL IS TO TAKE OVER THE CANAL.
THAT, I SUBMIT, MISSES THE WHOLE POINT, THE WHOLE EXPLANATION
OF PANAMANIAN ATTITUDES. THEY WANT A CANAL THAT WORKS WELL AS
MUCH AS WE DO. THEY HAVE PRIDE IN IT; THEY BENEFIT FROM IT.

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THE ISSUE, AS SEEN THROUGH PANAMANIAN EYES, IS NOT THE CANAL AT
ALL. RATHER IT IS THE PRESENCE IN A FRIENDLY COUNTRY OF A ZONE
THAT IS, IN FACT, A COLONY. (REMAINDER OF PARAGRAPH AS IN ORIGINAL.)

4. DELETE PARA. 18 AND SUBSTITUTE THE FOLLOWING:

"DESPITE SOME RHETORICAL OUTBURSTS AND OCCASIONAL INCIDENTS
AND DEMONSTRATIONS, THERE IS REMARKABLY LITTLE ANTI-AMERICANISM
IN PANAMA. THE VAST MAJORITY OF PANAMANIAN HARBOR WARM AND FRIENDLY
FEELINGS TOWARD OUR COUNTRY AND OUR CITIZENS. THEY WANT US AS

FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES.

"NONETHELESS, I REALIZE THAT SOME AMERICANS LIVING IN THE CANAL ZONE FEEL OTHERWISE. THEY ARE NERVOUS AND CONCERNED. I THINK WE CAN ALL UNDERSTAND THAT. FOR THEY SEE IN A NEW TREATY AN END TO THE VERY SPECIAL AND PROTECTED WAY OF LIFE THEY HAVE ENJOYED. THEY HAVE GONE THROUGH A VERY TRYING PERIOD IN WHICH THEY FELT THEIR FUTURE WAS BEING CHANGED, AND THEY WERE NOT AT ALL SURE IN WHAT DIRECTION. IN THE ABSENCE OF HARD INFORMATION, MANY OF THEM IMAGINED THE WORST. THEY BECAME VULNERABLE TO EVERY RUMOR AND EXAGGERATED PREDICTION. AND THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF RUMORS AND EXAGGERATIONS*

NOW, I THINK, THE SITUATION IS CHANGING DRASTICALLY. WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE TEXT OF THE TREATIES, AMERICANS IN THE CANAL ZONE REALIZE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SOLD DOWN THE RIVER. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR BASIC EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS, JOB SECURITY, PENSIONS AND THE LIKE ARE PRESERVED. THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNOR PARFITT AND SECRETARY ALEXANDER, THERE IS A VASTLY BETTER PERSPECTIVE AS TO WHAT A NEW TREATY MEANS -- AND WILL NOT MEAN.

ONE THING THAT HAS GREATLY BOTHERED MANY PEOPLE IN THE ZONE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE PROSPECT OF BEING SUBJECT TO PANAMANIAN LAWS AND JURISDICTION. TO MEET THIS CONCERN, THE TREATY NEGOTIATORS REACHED AGREEMENT ON CERTAIN PROCEDURAL GUARANTEES--SET FORTH IN AN ANNEX TO THE TREATY--THAT ASSURE CERTAIN SPECIAL PROTECTIONS TO ANY AMERICAN WHO, IN THE FUTURE, MAY FACE PROSECUTION. THOSE PROTECTIONS INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO A SPEEDY TRIAL, TO A LAWYER OF CHOICE, TO FULL DISCLOSURE OF CHARGES, TO HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRESENT AT ANY TRIAL, ETC., ETC., DOWN A VERY LONG LIST. I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA HAS EVERY INTENTION OF LIVING UP TO THESE GUARANTEES. I AM SURE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE AGREED TO THESE SPECIAL FEATURES AT ALL IF THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF ABIDING BY THEM. MOREOVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PANAMANIAN WANT AS MANY AMERICANS AS POSSIBLE TO REMAIN IN THEIR COUNTRY FOR SOME TIME -- TO PROVIDE THE SKILLS NEEDED TO KEEP THE CANAL OPERATIVE AND TO TRAIN PANAMANIAN TO DO THOSE JOBS.

MY CLEAR IMPRESSION IS THAT, AS THESE VARIOUS FEATURES OF THE NEW TREATY HAVE BECOME KNOWN, THE OUTLOOK AMONG AMERICANS IN THE ZONE HAS MODERATED. I BELIEVE THAT THE VAST MAJORITY--WHILE STILL HARBORING RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE--ARE READY TO SEE HOW SUCH A TREATY WORKS IN PRACTICE TO GIVE IT A FAIR CHANCE.

IN THIS CONNECTION, I SHOULD POINT OUT TO THIS COMMITTEE THAT THERE ARE SOME 3,000 AMERICAN EMPLOYEES OF THE CANAL COMPANY WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY A CHANGE IN THEIR LIFE STYLE AND IN THE RULES OF THE GAME. AT THE SAME TIME THERE ARE SOME 6,000 AMERI-

CANS LIVING AND WORKING PEACEFULLY IN PANAMA--IN BANKS AND BUSINESSES, SELLING AND BUYING, TEACHING AND PREACHING, IN SHORT DOING ALL THE THINGS THAT AMERICANS ARE DOING IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD, DAY IN AND DAY OUT--WITHOUT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OR SPECIAL RULES. WITH TIME--AND WITH GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES--I THINK OUR CITIZENS NOW IN THE ZONE WILL FIND THAT IT IS NOT THAT DIFFICULT TO LIVE AND WORK IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

5. DELETE PARA. 19 AND SUBSTITUTE THE FOLLOWING:

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I HAVE BEEN ASKED BY FRIENDS HERE AND IN PANAMA HOW THE VARIOUS JOINT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES PROVIDED FOR IN THE TREATY WILL WORK OUT. AS YOU KNOW, THERE IS PROVISION FOR A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TO ACT AS A KIND OF POLICY ADVISORY BOARD TO THE PANAMA CANAL COMMISSION. THERE WILL ALSO BE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF BOTH AMERICANS AND PANAMANIAN TO HELP SEE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY ARE CARRIED OUT IN AN ORDERLY AND REASONABLE FASHION. SIMILARLY, ON THE MILITARY SIDE, THERE WILL BE A COMBINED BOARD OF SENIOR MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES AS WELL AS A JOINT COMMITTEE TO HELP CARRY OUT THE MILITARY PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY. I CANNOT SAY, OF COURSE, HOW THESE VARIOUS BODIES WILL CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS. THEY WILL BE BREAKING NEW GROUND AND CARRYING OUT FUNCTIONS THAT HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY EXISTED.

WHAT IS CLEAR, OF COURSE, IS THAT THE WORKING OF ANY BODY OF MEN AND WOMEN DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE SELECTED TO DO THE JOB--AND ON THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY UNDERTAKE THEIR TASKS. I HAVE BEEN ASSURED BY THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT THAT THEY WANT THESE VARIOUS GROUPS TO BE EFFICIENT AND TO WORK IN HARMONY. FOR THAT PURPOSE, THEY HAVE TOLD ME, THEY INTEND TO PICK THE BEST POSSIBLE AND MOST HIGHLY QUALIFIED PEOPLE AVAILABLE. GIVEN THAT SPIRIT, I SEE NO REASON WHY THESE JOINT GROUPS SHOULD NOT WORK IN HARMONY AND IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

A RELATED QUESTION IS WHETHER THE PANAMANIAN WILL EVER BE ABLE TO RUN THE CANAL. THERE IS A KIND OF ARROGANCE IN THE VERY QUESTION THAT I DO NOT LIKE. IT REMINDS ME OF WAY SOME PEOPLE USED TO TALK OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF EGYPTIANS EVER RUNNING SUEZ. IN AN EARLIER PERIOD, YOU WILL RECALL HOW UNTHINKABLE IT WAS IN LONDON THAT A BUNCH OF RAGTAG COLONISTS COULD EVER RUN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. THE SHORT ANSWER, MR. CHAIRMAN, IS THAT OF COURSE PANAMA WILL BE ABLE TO RUN THE CANAL. 70 PER CENT OF THE WORK FORCE NOW OPERATING THE CANAL IS PANAMANIAN. THEY COULD DOUBTLESS FILL MANY
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OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL JOBS TOMORROW. AS FOR SOME OF

THE MORE HIGHLY DEVELOPED SKILLS, THERE IS NO REASON WHY
PANAMANIAN CAN NOT ACQUIRE THEM IN A REASONABLE TIME. AND WE CAN
HELP GREATLY IN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY TECHNICAL TRAINING.

(5) REMAINDER OF TEXT AS IN ORIGINAL.

JORDEN

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